

Message Text

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ACTION ARA-14

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 INR-10 NSAE-00

PA-01 USIA-06 SP-02 SS-15 NSC-05 AID-05 HEW-04

OMB-01 TRSE-00 /064 W

-----109156 212241Z /66

R 211730Z FEB 78

FM AMEMBSSY KINGSTON

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 9815

INFO AMEMBASSY BRIDGETOWN

AMEMBASSY GEORGETOWN

AMEBASSY NASSAU

AMEBASSY PORT OF SPAIN

USINT HAVANA

C O N F I D E N T I A L KINGSTON 2025

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PEPR, EAID, JM, CU

SUBJECT: CUBA TO AID IN BUILDING SIX MORE SCHOOLS

1. AT A PRESS CONFERENCE HELD ON FEBRUARY 12, EDUCATION MINISTER ERIC BELL AND YOUTH AND SPORTS MINISTER HUGH SMALL ANNOUNCED THAT THE CUBAN GOVERNMENT WILL ASSIST IN BUILDING SIX MORE SCHOOLS FOR JAMAICA. THE BUILDING PROGRAM WILL TAKE PLACE IN TWO PHASES. IN THE FIRST PHASE, SECONDARY SCHOOLS WILL BE BUILT IN MONTPELIER, ST. JAMES AND RHYMESBURY, CLARENDON AND A TRAINING COLLEGE FOR PHYSICAL EDUCATION TEACHERS WILL BE CONSTRUCTED IN ST. CATHERINE. IN THE SECOND PHASE, A SECONDARY SCHOOL WILL BE BUILT IN WESTMORELAND AND TRAINING SCHOOLS FOR "SPORTS BEGINNERS" WILL BE CONSTRUCTED IN ST. THOMAS AND ST. ELIZABETH.

2. THE COST OF THE SCHOOLS IS SET AT JA\$31.6 MILLION (US\$23.0 MILLION). ACCORDING TO PRESS ACCOUNTS, THE SCHOOLS WILL BE "BUILT BY CUBANS WITH JAMAICAN
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COUNTERPARTS WORKING ALONGSIDE THEM"; THE JAMAICANS "WILL INCLUDE AVAILABLE PERSONNEL WHO HAVE BEEN TRAINED IN THE CONSTRUCTION BRIGADE IN CUBA". AN ADVANCE PARTY OF 50 CUBANS WILL ERECT HOUSING FOR THE WORK FORCE. THREE CONSTRUCTION BRIGADES OF 200 PERSONS EACH WILL BE ENGAGED ON EACH PHASE. CUBA WILL PROVIDE MATERIALS AND EQUIPMENT FOR THE SCHOOLS; MOST OF THE MATERIALS AND

EQUIPMENT WILL BE SENT FROM CUBA. CUBA WILL ALSO PROVIDE FOOD, EXCEPT PERISHABLES, FOR THE BRIGADES. JAMAICA, ON THE OTHER HAND, WILL PROVIDE ACCOMMODATION, FOOD AND OTHER FACILITIES DURING THE PERIOD WHEN THE ADVANCE PARTY IS PREPARING HOUSING FOR THE BRIGADES. MOREOVER, DURING THE CONSTRUCTION PHASES, JAMAICA WILL ALSO PROVIDE "FULL BRIGADE TRANSPORTATION COSTS", PERISHABLE FOOD AND PETROL, AND WILL MEET LAUNDRY EXPENSES AND A "MINIMUM WEEKLY ALLOANCE FOR THE BRIGADES".

3. COMMENT: FROM CONVERSATION WITH MINISTRY OFFICIALS IT WAS NOT POSSIBLE TO LEARN WHAT KIND OF AN AGREEMENT WAS SIGNED WITH THE CUBANS. MINISTER OF EDUCATION BELL HANDLED NEGOTIATIONS PERSONALLY. A JAMAICAN OF CUBAN ANCESTRY HAS BEEN GIVEN RESPONSIBILITY FOR IMPLEMENTATION. MINED OFFICIALS ESTIMATE THE GOJ CONTRIBUTION TO THE PROGRAMME TO BE A MINIMUM OF U.S. \$1.5 MILLION PER SCHOOL, OR A TOTAL OF AT LEAST \$9 MILLION OUT OF A \$23 MILLION ACTIVITY.
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